

G. O. P. TOOK TOLL OF HIGHWAY SALARIES

Former Member of Department
Swears 5 Per Cent. Was
Held Out.

FRIENDS FIRST WITH REEL

Contractor Testifies at John
Doe Inquiry He Was Told
to "Come Over."

Ludow L. Mellus, a contractor of 416 West 154th street, told Chief Magistrate McAdoo at the John Doe inquiry into highway graft and campaign contributions yesterday that while the Republican party was in control of the State contributions were exacted regularly from the employees of the Department of Highways.

His testimony was the first bearing on the activities of the Republicans as collectors for campaign purposes.

Mr. Mellus was in the Highways Department from 1897 to 1907, except for a year that he spent in Cuba building bridges for the United States troops. He held various positions during that time and knew very well what was going on in what the department calls the eastern district, composed of several counties. He didn't pretend to be able to speak for the rest of the State.

"While you were in the State Engineer's office did they invite you to contribute to the Republican campaign fund?" he was asked.

"Well, not exactly," he said. "You were not invited. They simply took it out of your salary check."

"And what explanation was made when the employees found their check was short of the amount due?"

"There was no explanation. You would be 5 per cent. short and that was all there was to it."

"And you understood what that was done for?"

"Yes. Everybody knew."

"And how long did that continue?"

"I think it was stopped in the second administration of Gov. Hughes."

"And was it done throughout the State?"

"I don't know. That's the way they did it in the eastern district."

How Books Were Fixed.

"Don't see how they could have done that," said Chief Magistrate McAdoo.

"Those deductions from your salaries must have appeared somewhere or the books wouldn't have been kept straight."

"I had at that time a salary of \$2,750 besides an allowance for expenses," said the witness. "I would send in a voucher for my expenses every month and then I would be paid with a single check. This check included both my monthly salary and my expenses. The 5 per cent. was taken out of the whole amount."

"How about the men who had no expenses, the men who were on flat salaries?"

"I think the flat salary men also gave up."

"And they did that every year you were there?"

"They did it that way for three years. After that a man came around and collected."

"And you stood for it?"

"Yes. But we used to kick among ourselves. Some of the men thought they were being asked for too much."

"Whom did the money go to?"

"I don't know. We supposed it was for the Republican State committee, and

when the collectors came around they told us it was."

"Do you know if that is still the practice?"

"I don't think it is now."

Oil Contractor Tells of Gift.

George Sherrill of Hudson Falls, who got two contracts for putting oil on roads in 1911, said that in that year he made up his mind to contribute to the Democratic State committee. He had never done it before, he said, and he did it then, not because he was asked, but because of his interest in the campaign. When asked what there was about the campaign of 1911 that stirred his interest, he said he didn't know.

He then testified that he sent to Norman E. Mack a check for \$50, and that the check was not his personal check, but that of the Sherrill Engineering and Contracting Company, which was a corporation. He identified the check produced in court. It was indorsed by Mr. Mack and eventually found its way into the Democratic State committee's fund in this city.

Mr. Sherrill is employed in the Department of Public Works as an investigator of claims. Asked what contributions he had made in the last three years, he said he gave \$100 to Peter Manweller, private secretary of the Superintendent of Public Works. He said the contribution was not solicited, that he announced voluntarily that he wanted to contribute to the campaign fund and that some one told him Manweller was the one to send the money to. He couldn't remember who told him about Manweller and he said he never took the trouble to find out what became of his contribution.

Cornelius J. Reardon of Glens Falls related his trials in attempting to get a final payment of about \$800 that has been held up since he finished a road in Washington county in May, 1912. He said he knew he was expected to give somebody some money, but he couldn't say who told him that. He said he had seen Commissioner Carlisle and that before that he went to Commissioner C. Gordon Reel. He said Reel told him to go and see somebody.

"Was it Paul McCloud?" asked Assistant District Attorney Clark.

"No. I know McCloud. It wasn't him. I can't remember who it was."

"Was it some one in the Highways Department?"

"It must have been."

"What did Reel say to you?"

"There was lots of talk going on among the contractors about divvying up if you wanted to get your final payments on work, so when he told me to see some one about getting my payment fixed up I got hot and told him to go to the deuce."

"How did you know about this divvying up?"

"One man said to me, 'You've got to come over if you want to get settled up.' I can't say who he was. I never could remember his name."

"And you thought something like that was being started when you talked with Reel?"

"Yes, I concluded he was putting me up against some one and I got hot."

Reardon then said that he had his eye on a road from Glens Falls to Saratoga and that he went to Albany to look over the specifications and to see about getting the work.

Had Friends to Look After.

"I went to Reel and told him I wanted some repair work. He told me there were some contracts to be let, but that they would have to look after their friends. Then I went to Foley, the deputy commissioner in charge of repair work, and he told me I'd have to get a 'heeler.' He asked me if I knew Tommy Dunn, State committee man from Saratoga, and I said I did. Then he asked me if I knew Anderson, the county chairman, and I told him I knew him. He also asked me about a man named Gangley."

"I went back to Reel after talking with

Foley and when he spoke again about taking care of his friends I said, 'Good day; I'm a Republican.'"

Reardon said he spoke to Gov. Dix, who was a schoolmate of his, about getting this repair work. He said that Reel told him that the work would be advertised. The next thing he heard of it, he said, was when James E. Flood came to him, said he had got the contract and wanted to buy stone of Reardon. Flood is president of the Flood-Van Wirt Company. It was his partner's testimony that went far toward getting the indictment of Arthur A. McLean, treasurer of the Democratic State committee.

John J. Herlihy of Glens Falls, who has offices with John E. Conalus in Albany, refused to sign an immunity waiver and was taken from the stand after he had given his name. He said he was acting on advice of counsel.

Edward J. Doyle of Herkimer said that he had a hard time collecting a final payment of between \$4,000 and \$5,000. He said he was advised to see Foley and Paul McCloud. He said McCloud told him he had nothing to do with final payments and told him to come around the next day. Doyle said he sent a lawyer, but his lawyer didn't get anything. He said he was finally paid fourteen months after his work had been accepted. Doyle also testified that back in 1905, when he was employed in the Highways Department, it was the custom to contribute money for campaign purposes.

Testimony Before Osborne Denied.

Ludlow L. Mellus asked District Attorney Whitman to call him as a witness in order that he might refute some testimony that was given before Commissioner James W. Osborne in Albany last Saturday. John J. Connor testified that Mellus offered him the best pair of horses in Columbia county if the specifications in a contract Mellus had were changed. Mellus said this was untrue. He admitted that the specifications were changed, but he said the residents along the road petitioned for the change because they saw that the road would never stand up unless they were.

S. Nelson Hand testified before Mr. Osborne that Mellus told him and Connor that he had contributed between \$4,000 and \$4,500 to the Democratic State committee in consideration of this contract. Connor testified that Mellus said he lost that much. Mellus said yesterday he did lose that much on the contract, but that he had never contributed to anybody as a Republican had never contributed a cent to any Democratic committee or its representative. He said Connor had a grudge against him because he refused to build a concrete wall in front of Connor's house and to charge the State for it.

Mellus said that he befriended Abraham Bress, a Troy tailor, who was down on the books as a laborer and who did the work of an inspector, was really a pretty good inspector. He said Bress worked at least three days a week. It was testified before Commissioner Osborne that Bress knew as little of highway building as a tailor might be expected to know and that he aggravated his deficiency as an inspector by constantly falling asleep in a chair which he brought to work with him.

The John Doe hearings will be continued on Friday. The Grand Jury which is investigating highway and aqueduct frauds is to meet this afternoon.

ROAD GRAFT IN SUFFOLK.

Witnesses Say Subway Dirt Was Used as Peckskill Gravel.

RIVERHEAD, L. I., Jan. 5.—District Attorney Ralph C. Greene intimated yesterday that a number of indictments are likely to be found by the special Grand Jury which is investigating road graft in Suffolk county. He intimated also that the indictments may not be confined to the contractors.

Persons called to testify said yesterday that they are prepared to swear that some road material which was spread upon certain highways to cover "Peckskill gravel" specifications was simply dirt and gravel excavated from the Lexington avenue subway and shipped to Long Island. While they declined to be specific as to the location of the roads or to divulge the names of the contractors, the witnesses declared that they have abundant evidence to prove their allegations. They claim to have followed wagons loaded with the subway excavation material to a point where it was loaded upon trains under consignment to road contractors on Long Island.

GOV. FERRIS BEGINS CALUMET INQUIRY

Michigan Executive Goes to
Houghton, in Heart of Cop-
per Mine District.

CHEERED BY BIG CROWD

Strikers and Union Officials In-
vited to Present Their
Own Cases.

Houghton, Mich., Jan. 6.—Gov. W. N. Ferris arrived here to-night and more than ten thousand people crowded the narrow streets to greet him. The Governor is here to get at the real cause of the great copper strike which has cost men and companies close to eight millions of dollars and cost the State a half million or more besides.

Gov. Ferris stopped at the hotel entrance and spoke briefly to the crowds, thousands of whom wore Citizens Alliance buttons. Standing bareheaded in the frosty night the Governor said:

"I'm here in behalf of no particular class. I am here to get information which I, as Governor, want. I will learn all I can, and I want to say that every man who has any information that I should have, whether he be striker or mine owner or the humblest worker, I want him to bring it to me. My chambers will always be open. There will be nothing secret."

"I promise nothing, but I hope for everything and pray that between us we may settle this strike. I assure you that before I leave I will do everything possible to end this strike. I want to see all this bitterness done away with. We have got to get together."

Later the Executive took occasion to deny that the threatened Congressional investigation had anything to do with his visit. He said that he decided immediately after his conference with Clarence Darrow, Mahon and other labor leaders in Lansing last week to come to the copper country.

Gov. Ferris intends to inquire into the alleged kidnapping of President Charles Moyer during his investigation, and he discussed that matter to-night with Special Prosecutor George E. Nichols of Grand Rapids, who is handling the Grand Jury investigation of this and other strike violence cases. He would not discuss the Moyer affair, excepting to say that he expects to get to the bottom of this as well as everything else he will investigate while here.

To-morrow morning the Governor will confer with officials of both Houghton and Keweenaw counties, which comprise most of the territory embraced in the strikerridden district.

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